

BM Caterers to trial tech-enabled reusable packaging solution

12 months ago



BM Caterers is trialling a technology-enabled reusable food and drink packaging solution that could remove around 279,500 single-use cups and containers per year from its waste stream.

Britain's growing '[lunch on the go](#)' habit is generating nearly 11 billion items of packaging waste a year, much of which is not recycled. Addressing its disposable waste stream was identified by BM as a key next step in being a more sustainable and responsible business and establishing a circular system to eliminate single-use waste. The catering business is set to launch an eight-week trial at a client site in London from mid-August where disposable cups and hot food takeaway containers at the onsite restaurant will be replaced with CauliBox reusables.

Customers will be able to request a CauliBox or cup at the counter when ordering their food. The till operator will scan a QR code on the container and customers can tap a payment card to pay a £1 deposit. Or alternatively, app users can scan the container's QR code using their app and show their confirmation at the till, with the payment linked to the app and no deposit necessary. They can then return the containers at an AI-powered, self-service onsite collection kiosk for them to be washed onsite and reused.

The scheme will be at zero cost to the customer, with any deposit automatically refunded on return, provided they return the containers within seven days. The system will allow customers full visibility of their borrow history and impact, with return reminders for app users, and cardless users able to download the app later and link their card to view their data. Regular returners will also earn 'CauliCoins' which they can use to obtain rewards, such as discounts on drinks or meals at the restaurant.

CauliBox containers are estimated to save 9.75l of water and reduce 237.5g of carbon dioxide emissions

per use and have 92% lower CO2 emissions than a comparable compostable clamshell container. And when a CauliBox container is no longer reusable, the company will collect and recycle them.

While implementation of the scheme will be more expensive during the first year than the disposable products currently being bought in, the savings on not having to continue buying containers and subsequent disposal, as well as the positive environmental impact, are estimated to bring a return on investment after the first 12 months.

Antony Prentice, joint MD, BM Caterers, said: "While looking for more ways to reduce our environmental impact, we were recommended CauliBox having heard some really good reviews about their reusables. We can't wait to trial their reusable containers, which would have a huge impact on reducing our single-use waste and emissions."